

**ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR PLANT AND ANIMAL HEALTH (OIRSA)
RELATING TO THE WTO AGREEMENT ON THE
APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Report to the 51st Meeting of the Committee
on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures,
30 June and 1 July 2011

The following communication, received on 21 June 2011, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

1. Specific support for agricultural production chains

1. In coordination with national sanitary and phytosanitary authorities and the private sector, OIRSA is continuing to implement sanitary and phytosanitary programmes in support of agri-food chains. The following action has been taken over the past three months.

Phytosanitary programme in support of the citrus fruit production chain

2. With technical support from the Government of Chinese Taipei and its technical bodies, OIRSA assisted the authorities of Panama and Honduras in the use of Huanglongbing (HLB) control technologies, including endotherapy using antibiotics and vector insect control. As a supplement to this support, training workshops were held in both cases.

3. In Honduras, a regional workshop was held to provide training in the control of HLB and its vector insect, with the participation of representatives of OIRSA's nine member countries and with support from, and in coordination with, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), the National Agricultural Health Service of Honduras (SENASA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). EMBRAPA phytopathologist Dr Eduardo Girardi was the expert and facilitator of the workshop, which was attended by 70 participants.

4. In Nicaragua, technical and financial support is ongoing for the programme to maintain the northern part of Lake Xolotlán as an area free of the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*).

5. OIRSA and the IDB Mesoamerica Fruit-Growing Project (PROMEFRUT) are running workshops in each country of the OIRSA region for citrus nursery workers in order to promote active participation in the nursery certification programme and in the implementation of the regional standards on this subject proposed by OIRSA. This contributes to preventing the spread of pests and diseases through the movement of plant material.

6. The phytosanitary authorities of Panama were given support in reviewing the following standards:

- (a) The "Regulations on Organic Agriculture for Panama";
- (b) the "New List of Synthetic Chemical Pesticides Prohibited and Restricted for Sale in Panama".

7. In the interests of sound HLB control, OIRSA continues to promote the strategy for early detection of diseases and the delimitation of infected areas in backyards and smallholdings that endanger commercial areas. Once the areas have been located, depending on geographical location, the presence of natural barriers and the agroecological situation and taking account of wind predominance and direction, a peripheral "buffer zone" is established in order to protect commercial citrus growing areas. All the necessary phytosanitary measures are applied in these areas, including: elimination of trees infected by host plants such as *Murraya paniculata*; elimination of the vector insect; fruit tree replacement programmes.

Phytosanitary programme in support of the vegetable production chain

8. Pursuant to Resolution No. 10, "*Tuta absoluta* Survey", adopted by the 57th Ordinary Meeting of the International Regional Committee for Plant and Animal Health (CIRSA), OIRSA, in addition to developing a uniform detection procedure, acquired and made available to some countries traps and pheromones specific to this pest, in order to facilitate the detection process. Virtual technical meetings have also been held with South American specialists on the pest, to exchange knowledge and experiences. A protocol on action to be taken in the event of the detection of tomato leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*) is also available.

9. OIRSA provided support in the form of emergency funding to Panama in order for the authorities to stem an outbreak of tomato leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*) in the uplands of Chiriquí Province, Panama.

10. OIRSA continues to support implementation of the programme to eliminate the South American cucurbit fruit fly, *Anastrepha grandis*, in Darién Province, Panama.

11. In Honduras, the Regional Course for the Phytosanitary Management of Vegetables was held for heads of phytosanitary surveillance programmes in the organization's member countries.

Swine health programmes

12. In the context of the PREFIP III Project, which OIRSA is implementing with support from the Government of Chinese Taipei, Nicaragua and Honduras have received support for their swine health programmes with a view to their self-declaration as countries free from classical swine fever. Thanks to this joint effort, Nicaragua made such a self-declaration in May 2011, and Honduras in June 2011.

13. In El Salvador, during the Tenth Central American and Caribbean Congress on Pig Farming, 2011, OIRSA gave the presentation "Classical Swine Fever in Central America, Belize, Panama and Dominican Republic: Status and Outlook".

14. At the Second Biennial Meeting of the Continental Plan on Classical Swine Fever in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Congress of the Ibero-American Pig Farming Organization (Portugal), OIRSA presented a detailed report on the declaration of freedom from classical swine fever in countries throughout the continental region of the OIRSA membership.

Bovine health programme

15. In order to build up veterinary diagnostic capacity in respect of bovine brucellosis, OIRSA tested and evaluated the "indirect and competitive ELISA" technique, and supplied equipment, materials and laboratory reagents to those countries in the region that face the greatest constraints.

16. OIRSA supported the design of studies to determine the prevalence of tuberculosis and brucellosis. Such studies have already been conducted in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Poultry health programme

17. In Honduras, a regional simulation was undertaken for the control and eradication of avian diseases.

18. In the Dominican Republic, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, campaigns for the prevention of avian diseases were conducted in 13 rural communities.

2. Training, technical assistance and dissemination activities relating to agricultural health and trade

19. In Honduras, in coordination with the Food Safety Division of the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) and with support from the National Association of Aquaculture Producers of Honduras (ANDAH), training workshops were held on the health and safety of fisheries products (European Union requirements) and good aquaculture practice (farmed shrimp and Tilapia).

20. In El Salvador, under the AgroCAFTA Programme implemented in the Central American region and in coordination with the El Salvador Exporters' Corporation (COEXPORT), the Central American and Caribbean Federation of Chambers and Associations of Exporters (FECAEXCA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through the Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB/MIF), a regional refresher course was held for agro-industry consultants on quality, safety and security in the agro-export chain (from farmgate to consumer), sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, labelling, customs regulations and the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act.

21. In Nicaragua, the Comprehensive Programme for Improvement of Milk Production and Quality (PROCAL) is being implemented in coordination with the Directorate General of Agricultural Protection and Health (DGPSA)/Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry (MAGFOR), the National Agrarian University of Managua and the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, and milk producers cooperatives and with support from the National Agricultural Health Centre (CENSA) of Cuba.

22. In Guatemala, in coordination with the Food Safety Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, a pre-audit was conducted on the health and safety of fisheries products (farmed shrimp and tuna), in accordance with European Union requirements.

23. In Guatemala, in coordination with the Regional Technical Group on Agriculture, a workshop for ongoing training in agricultural health was conducted.

24. In El Salvador, a regional training course was held on implementation of the geographic information system, focusing on epidemiological surveillance in animal health. The course was aimed at public officials, representatives of the private sector and academics.

25. OIRSA took part in the 4th Meeting of Caribbean Plant Health Directors (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago), at which it reported on regional experience in controlling the South American cucurbit fruit fly (*Anastrepha grandis*) and the tomato leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*).

26. We have started putting out a special electronic bulletin on phytosanitary aspects of production and trade in the rice food chain (NOTIARROZ). It can be viewed (in Spanish) at the following web address: <http://www.oirsa.org/aplicaciones/subidoarchivos/BibliotecaVirtual/NOTIARROZ1tungro.pdf>

27. In El Salvador, at the 56th Ordinary Meeting of the CIRSA Technical Committee, whose membership comprises directors of animal health, plant health, food safety and agricultural quarantine, OIRSA gave a presentation on the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in which it drew attention to the facility's importance to the provision of support to national capacity building for sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The STDF Secretariat lent support for OIRSA's presentation.

3. Strengthening of national institutions in order to facilitate trade

28. STDF Project 284, "Strengthening the National SPS Committee in Honduras" continues to be implemented with the support of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). With project support, a policy on sanitary and phytosanitary measures has been devised for Honduras and a study has been completed on the "Evaluation of the Economic Impact of the Application of Sanitary Measures on Trade in Strategic Products of Animal Origin".

29. In Nicaragua, in conjunction with the DGPSA/MAGFOR authorities, coordination meetings have been held in order to define a strategy allowing the country to achieve the status of controlled risk for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). The legislation on BSE prevention and control was reviewed in this context.

4. Support for regional trade facilitation

30. With a view to facilitating trade in dairy products between El Salvador and Nicaragua, OIRSA continues to facilitate the exchange of official information on dairy plant inspection under the sanitary protocol to facilitate bilateral trade between the two countries.

5. Support for the harmonization and equivalence process

31. In the context of the cooperation agreement on food safety signed with the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), both of which are agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and with the participation of an expert from the International Commission of Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF), a meeting was held, in which OIRSA took part, to review Central American Customs Union regulations (RTCA) on the sanitary registration of foods and microbiological criteria for food safety and their equivalence with the regulations of the United States of America.

32. OIRSA and the Regional Technical Committee for Avian Health are in the process of reviewing and updating the avian guidelines for facilitation of international and regional trade, and new guidelines have been drawn up for excreta control and management and for biosafety in poultry holdings.

6. Strategic alliances for the promotion of health and trade

33. In the context of the programme for cooperation with the Chilean Agricultural and Livestock Service, support was given to the preparation of a technical cooperation project on food safety with the Food Safety Division (DIA)/SENASA/Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) of Honduras.

In order to comment on this report or obtain additional information on plant health activities, please contact: Edwin Aragón, e-mail: earagon@oirsa.org.

For more information on food safety, please contact: Óscar García, e-mail: ogarcia@oirsa.org.

For any queries on animal health activities, please contact: Abelardo de Gracia, e-mail: adegracia@oirsapanama.org.pa.

We invite you to visit our website: <http://www.oirsa.org/>
